

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Final Office Action mailed July 22, 2005 has been carefully considered. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Status and Amendment to the Claims

Claims 2-4, 6-11, 14-15 are now pending and under consideration. Claims 12-13 were withdrawn from consideration as the result of an earlier restriction requirement.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowance of claims 9-11. Applicants are further grateful for the indication of allowability of claims 4, 8, and 14-15 subject to their rewriting in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1 and 5 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Claims 14 and 15 have been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of independent claims 1 and 5, respectively.

Claims 2 and 6 have been amended to depend from claims 14 and 15, respectively.

The text of claims 2-4 and 6-8 is unchanged, but their meaning is changed because they now depend from amended claims.

The 35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection

Claims 1-3 and 5-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Behzadi (U.S. Pat. No. 6,728,220) in view of Satran et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,430,183), among which claims 1 and 5 are independent claims.

Rejected claims 1 and 5 have been canceled, without prejudice. In addition, claims 14 and 15, which have been indicated as allowable, have been rewritten into independent form in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. Claims 2 and 6 have been amended such that dependent claims 2-4 and 6-8 directly or indirectly depend from claims 14 and 15, respectively.

With this amendment, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims based on Behzadi and Satran be withdrawn. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully asserted that the claims are now in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

It is believed that this Amendment places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance. Early favorable consideration of this Amendment is earnestly solicited.

Request for Entry of Amendment

Entry of this Amendment will place the Application in condition for allowance. Furthermore, as explained above, the present amendment neither raises a new issue nor

requires a new search, since the amendment only cancels the rejected claims, and other changes are concerned with formality of the claims. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment is appropriate and is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner is thanked for the kind allowance of claims 9-11, and for finding of allowable subject matter in claim 4, 8 and 14-15 if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance as set forth in the Office Action. However, Applicants point out that the reasons for allowability of the above referenced claims are not limited to the reasons for allowance as set forth in the Office Action, and that additional reasons for allowability may exist, each of which may be independently sufficient to establish the patentability of one or more pending claims.

Applicants respectfully reserve the right to introduce, articulate, or otherwise comment on any such additional reasons for allowance as may be appropriate in any future proceedings concerning the claimed invention.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 12-2252.

Respectfully submitted,
THELEN REID & PRIEST, LLP

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